

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT
COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT
OF TEXAS HOUSTON DIVISION

RUSSELL, et al,
Plaintiffs

v.

HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS, et al,
Defendants

[]
[]
[]
[]
[]
[]

No. 4:19-cv-00226
Hon. Lee H. Rosenthal
U.S. District Judge

**HARRIS COUNTY’S ANSWER TO PLAINTIFF’S
SECOND AMENDED COMPLAINT**

INTRODUCTION

The right to liberty and guarantee of due process is indeed the touchstone of our freedoms as pledged in the Constitution. Harris County recognizes that the mass detention of individuals who are presumed to be innocent, caused by an antiquated “one size fits all” justice system favoring the wealthy, must be fast-tracked into the 21st century.

Currently, there are primarily two pre-trial bond detention structures: one for the wealthy and another for everybody else. Harris County believes it is time to end the sale of liberty for pre-trial detainees, and ensure justice for all. The only way to eviscerate the line between money and freedom is through the creation and implementation of a felony bond system that accounts for each detainee as an individual, and not as a dollar amount.

Harris County worked diligently with the stakeholders in the misdemeanor bail case to craft a historic settlement. Now, it is with uncompromising insistence on guaranteeing basic freedoms to all Harris County individuals, that Harris County embarks on the journey to overhaul the felony bail system in this case. We are enlightened to the fact that detaining somebody based upon their wealth is barbaric, unjust and defies the basic liberties guaranteed to us as a society. Armed with that knowledge, Harris County requests that we craft and implement a felony bond system that promises Equal Protection and Due Process, and demolishes the systematic incarceration of our most impoverished felony arrestees.

ANSWER

1. Harris County admits the following paragraphs of the Second Amended Class Action Complaint: 1-10; 12; 14; 16-17; 24-27; 30-37; 82-175.
2. Harris County is without sufficient knowledge at this time to admit or deny all or a portion of the following paragraphs of the Second Amended Class Action Complaint: 11; 18-22; 38-81; 176-204.
3. Harris County denies the following paragraphs: 28-29.
4. The following paragraphs require no response: 13; 15; 23; 176-204.

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Defendant Harris County requests relief to which it shall show itself entitled.

Respectfully submitted,

OF COUNSEL:

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on July 9, 2020, a copy of this document was served on counsel of record via electronic filing in accordance with the USDC Southern District of Texas Procedures for Electronic Filing.

/s/ *Melissa Spinks*
Melissa Spinks